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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 003337

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STATE FOR AF/FO AND AF/RSA FOR WHALDEMAN

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TAGS: PREL KPKO SO AU

SUBJECT: USAU: AU PARTNERS DISCUSS AMISOM SUPPORT WITH COMMISSION; AMBASSADOR DELIVERS DEMARCHE

REF: A. STATE 129524

1B. ADDIS ABABA 3289

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN A. SIMON, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) Summary: The African Union (AU) is ready to provide additional AMISOM troops in Mogadishu and it is also prepared to publicly reiterate its support for the rehiring of those troops under an eventual UN peacekeeping mission. The AU is still waiting for some of its international partners to confirm their political willingness to support AMISOM beyond its current mandate. AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Ramtane Lamamra is heading to New York this week to try to win UN support for an international stabilization force under AMISOM auspices. Meanwhile, senior AU officials say a withdrawal by all foreign troops from Somalia within a few weeks would be catastrophic not only for Somalis, but also for international community efforts to combat piracy and stabilize the region. End Summary.

12. (C) Ambassadors from the EU, the U.K., France, and USAU met December 10 with AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Ramtane Lamamra and several of his military advisers to discuss international community support for AMISOM. As noted in Ref. B, diplomats from the U.K., the EU, and the U.S. met earlier in the week to explore funding scenarios to expand and sustain AMISOM.

13. (C) Lamamra set the tone for the meeting by asking if all participants believed AMISOM should remain in Somalia. He said he was concerned that the debate over AMISOM had been "hijacked" by the announcement of the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops at the end of the year. During the ensuing 90-minute debate, the U.K. showed the greatest resistance to supporting AMISOM beyond its current mandate. The EU and France showed more willingness to contribute to AMISOM, although they had not received specific instructions from their capitals.

14. (C) Lamamra said that a decision on renewing the AMISOM mandate could be made as early as December 22 when the AU Peace and Security Council convenes. (Note: AMISOM's mandate expires in mid-January. End Note.) Lamamra said it was important to get everyone's position in time for the PSC to deliberate. The new mandate would likely focus on implementing the Djibouti Agreement only within Mogadishu. The French Ambassador asked whether the mandate would cover Baidoa where the TFG parliament resides. Lamamra responded that this was beyond the capabilities he envisioned for AMISOM, even if it is reinforced. He suggested TFG/ARS forces could have the task of protecting Baidoa, potentially with Ethiopian support.

¶ 15. (C) As he has done in recent meetings with the Ambassador, Lamamra outlined an ever-growing list of strategies for garnering international support for AMISOM. This week, for example, AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping is writing letters to individual African heads of state appealing to them to support the mission. The AU also has a force generation mission criss-crossing the continent hoping to persuade member states to contribute military and police troops to AMISOM. Lamamra himself was due to depart this evening for New York to consult with UN officials to win international support for the creation of an international stabilization force of which AMISOM would be a major part. (Note: The Ambassador noted after the meeting that the US is pushing for a full UNPKO. Lamamra responded that, of course, this is the preferable option but was not convinced it is possible. End Note.) Lamamra also noted recent AU diplomacy to persuade the Arab League to consider contributing money toward AMISOM. As partners and the AU search for solutions, they need to be creative, Lamamra said. He suggested that military equipment for AMISOM might be available from the UN's logistics base in Brindisi, or by borrowing from the Ethiopians as they withdraw their forces.

¶ 16. (C) In a separate meeting, the Ambassador urged Chairperson Ping to issue a strong statement in support of a UN peacekeeping operation (UNPKO) in Somalia (Ref. A). He said that the U.S. is working on a UNSC resolution calling for a peacekeeping force of 14,000. The Ambassador noted that Ping had previously made public the AU's support for a UNPKO in Somalia. Ping agreed that a UNPKO was a "necessity" in Somalia, adding that no one wanted to contemplate the

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"catastrophic scenario" that would unfold should Ethiopian forces and AMISOM troops from Burundi and Uganda withdraw. The Ambassador said the cost of a withdrawal scenario would be enormous compared to the cost of deploying a peacekeeping operation in Somalia. During the meeting, Ping called Lamamra to instruct him to prepare the statement.

¶ 17. (C) In his meeting with Ambassadors, Lamamra said that international efforts to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia would fail unless there was success in stabilizing Somalia. Responding to the U.K. Ambassador who saw further investment in AMISOM as a "gamble," Lamamra said that the alternative of seeing Mogadishu fall was even less desirable and that the gamble was one worth taking. "If we try and we fail, this is not the first time. But we have to give it a good try."

¶ 18. (C) The EU Ambassador agreed that it was important to at least try. Similarly, the French Ambassador expressed support for a more robust AMISOM. He said there were three prerequisites for success of the mission: the Somali political establishment puts its house in order, a firm commitment by Troop Contributing Countries to stay in Somalia even after Ethiopian forces withdraw, and a commitment by the international community to support AMISOM. (Note: Nicolas Bwakira, Special Representative of the AU Commission for Somalia, is in Kampala to determine Uganda's commitment to the mission. End Note.)

¶ 19. (C) The EU Ambassador expressed concern regarding the AU's capability to manage all the new streams of assistance necessary to implement the plan laid out by Lamamra. Lamamra suggested that partners send additional experts to the AU's Strategic Planning and Management Unit to help the AU with this task. Such experts would be needed to help with a withdrawal as well, if that became necessary.

Comment:

¶ 10. (C) While Ping expressed strong support for UNPKO, Lamamra does not see that as a necessary outcome of his

consultations in New York. USUN may want to engage with Lamamra to convince him that a UNPKO is both necessary and possible.

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